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Mayor says Austin won't pay for Waller Creek Tunnel mistake

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AUSTIN (KXAN) — Taxpayers will not have to foot the bill for what is being called a multimillion-dollar design flaw in the Waller Creek Tunnel project, Mayor Lee Leffingwell assured.

A building for the new project is too tall and would block views to the



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“This was apparently an engineering design error,” he said. “And that will likely fall to the responsibility of the engineers and designers to come up with the correction, whatever it is.”

The flaw could cost between \$15 million and \$45 million to fix. However, Leffingwell says that is a wide-ranging number, and he doubts it will be that high.

“I will say this,” he added, “the completion of the tunnel will not be delayed.”

City Councilwoman Kathie Tovo has watched the progress closely and said council was not notified until two meetings ago of the design mistake.

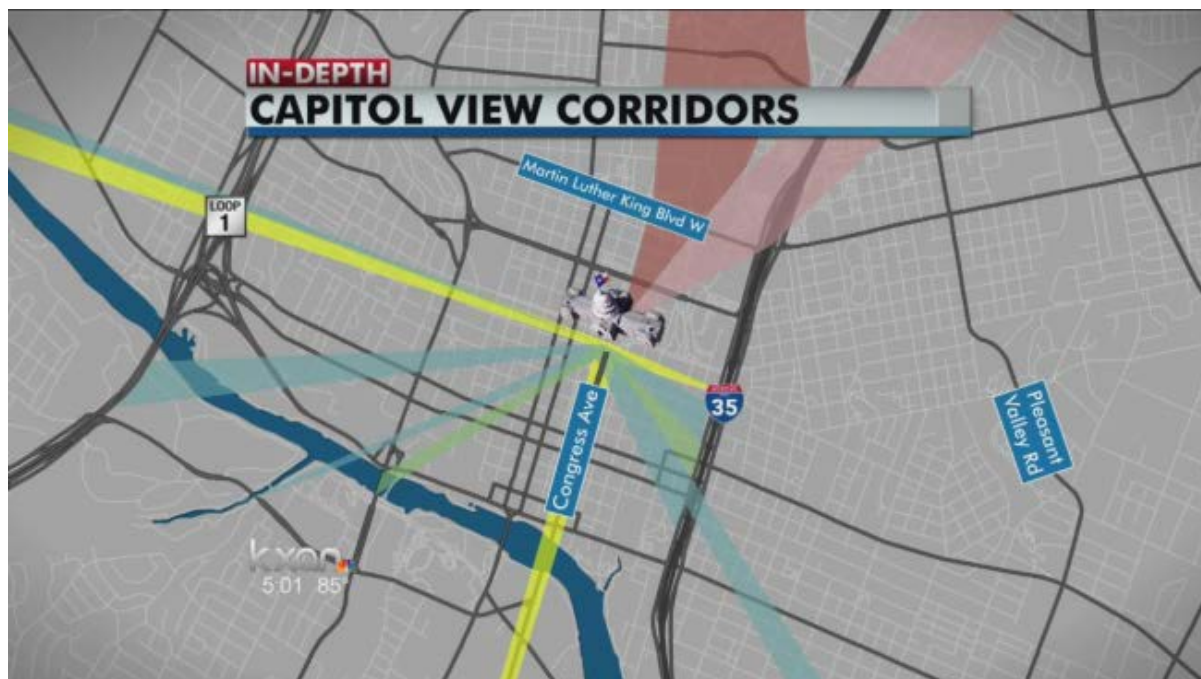
“There are questions that need to be answered,” said Tovo. “I will say I was very surprised to hear about that mistake when we were in closed session.”

The project plan calls for a 32-foot intake building, but that is 16 feet too high, according to state law.

In 1983, lawmakers passed a law stopping any buildings from obstructing the view along the Capitol Corridor.

The city has also retained a law firm just in case the engineering firms assigned to the project do not correct the mistake without asking the city to be responsible for the cost.

Lawmakers could alter the law to allow the higher building, but that option is not currently on the table.



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